

The Note by **letitbeme**

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Summary: After moving into yet another new house, Joyce finds something surprising in an old yearbook. Note: this takes place in a future where Hopper's back, him and Joyce are together, and he bought the new house in Hawkins for their families. Enjoy!

The Note

It had been a long day of moving boxes but with help from the kids, Nancy, Jonathan, Steve and Robin, the Hopper-Byers clan was officially moved into their new house. Joyce and Hop finally took the chance to sit down on the couch.

"Thanks again for helping us out today, sweeties" Joyce said to the group as they were all finding places to sit on or around the couch.

"Don't mention it Mrs. B, you know you're the party's second mom." Mike said next to Joyce with his arm around El matching Hopper having his arm around Joyce.

Joyce was flattered and curious by that comment, "Thanks, Mike, who's the first mom, though?"

As if on cue, Steve came back into the room from the kitchen.

"Pizzas are on the way, Joyce and Hop are the only ones not chipping in for it, FYI."

Joyce didn't say anything, smiling when she realized who Mike meant.

"Now, we just have to unpack all this crap we have" Hopper said in a low tone.

"Yay, the fun part" Joyce added sarcastically.

Steve glanced to a partially opened box near the chair he was sitting in (that he had pushed Lucas out of) and noticed something.

"Hello, are these your yearbooks?" he said reaching for one.

Joyce started to laugh, "Oh yeah, I forgot I saved those" she saw the one Steve had and reached for it herself, "Hop, check it out, this one's our senior year."

Hop started to smile, the memories flooding back, "Oh yeah, Class of 1965."

Joyce started flipping through the pages, "Here's a picture of me in Mock U.N."

Dustin looked in, "Whoa! Mrs. Byers, that's you?"

"Yeah, that's me, Dustin."

"You were a babe back then!" he said in a surprised tone.

"Thank you, I don't know about babe though..." Joyce said trying not to blush.

"I actually agree with him, you were a looker back then." Mike said leaning over to get a better look.

"Please don't talk about our mom like that." Will said uncomfortably.

Max spotted another picture and spoke up, "Hop, were you a football player?"

"Yeah, I was Quarterback."

"Wow, Joyce was a babe and you were a stud!"

Now, Hop was the one getting embarrassed, "Well, I don't know if I'd say stud..."

"Seriously, Nancy, come look at him, he looked good, didn't he?"

Nancy leaned over and looked at the picture in question, "Whoa, you did look good, Chief, I'm actually having trouble not looking at you now" she said almost getting entranced by the picture along with Max before both Jonathan and Lucas loudly cleared their throats awkwardly getting their girlfriends' attention.

Joyce turned another page, "Here's our class picture, Hop was one of the big guys so he's there in the back" she said pointing him out.

Hop pointed out Joyce in the picture, "Yeah, and there's you in front...with Lonnie."

Things slipped into an awkward silence before Hop tried to make up

for mentioning him by saying, "Hey, hindsight's 20/20, and she made the right choice eventually" which got a few laughs.

Joyce lifted the yearbook back up and a folded-up slip of paper fell out of the back.

"Hey, what's that?" someone asked.

"I don't know" Joyce said picking it up off the floor.

Hopper had a look of shock on his face before softly asking, "You never found it?"

"What is it?"

Hopper continued talking softly, "I think you better open that."

Confused, Joyce went ahead and opened it, she glanced at the paper before looking at Hop with a surprised and happy look and then back at the paper before she started reading it.

"Dear Joyce, I know you're with Lonnie now and I don't want to mess with that. I just want to say that I'm really gonna miss you next year and that I wish that thing between us had become something more. You really are one of the best gals around and you deserve only the best. Don't get me wrong, I know I'm not the best but I think I could get there someday if I was with you. I hope the rest of your life goes how you want it and you never lose what makes you happy. Just know that somewhere deep down in my heart, I'll always hold a soft spot for you. Until we meet again, your pal, Jim."

Joyce looked back at him with a warm sweet smile on her face and he looked a little embarrassed and she said, "I can't believe you did this, when did you do this?"

He was still quiet but he eventually said, "last day of school, I signed your yearbook and slipped that note in. I can't believe you never found it."

"I guess I never looked at this one that much."

The room was quiet, no one was quite sure what to say, then there

was a knock at the door and Steve spoke up, "Oh, that's the pizzas. Uh, some of you want to help me out in the kitchen with this?" he said forcefully. Thankfully, everyone got the hint and left Joyce and Hopper alone on the couch to talk this over.

Hopper was avoiding eye contact, still embarrassed over this being found out.

Joyce eventually started talking, "I don't know how different things would be if I had found this."

"Me neither. But, you wouldn't have Jonathan or Will, so that's something."

Joyce looked at him and grabbed his hand, "Yeah and we wouldn't have this nice big family either, besides, it's like you said, I made the right choice eventually."

Hopper looked at her, starting to smile, "yeah...yeah, you did."

Joyce stood up, "Let's eat, I'm starving."

Hopper stood up and wrapped his arm around her shoulder, her arm around his waist, he kissed her on the forehead and they walked towards the kitchen and he said, "for the record, you're still a babe."

Joyce giggled a little and said, "and you're still a stud."